

**Testimony of Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI)
to the Public Health Committee
in Support of H.B. 6549
March 11, 2011**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today in support of H.B. 6549.

For the record, I am Dr. Linda Erlanger, Advocacy Consultant for the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative, also known as COHI. COHI is the state's leading oral health advocate, working with other stakeholders across Connecticut to advance oral health for all.

H.B. 6549, An Act Concerning the Public Health's Oversight Responsibilities Relating to Scope of Practice Determinations for Health Care Professions, proposes a fair and balanced process to evaluate evidence-based information for requested changes to a professional scope of practice. This evidence is important to determine the impact on quality, safety and access to care if, or when, scope of practice advancements are recommended for legislative review.

As an oral health advocacy-focused organization, COHI appreciates that population demands, advances in technology, decreased health-care dollars and other demographic, social and environmental factors may stimulate discussion on healthcare delivery needs. We are encouraged that the bill's proposal includes an official appointment of a committee whose members have no professional or personal interest or investment in the scope of practice request. We are confident that this committee would carefully review the value of any such request, with consideration to consumer needs, the competency and availability of dental care resources, the benefits and costs to the public and the professional community, as well as the outcomes of similar scope of practice decisions in other regions of the U.S.

A scope of practice request can pose challenging debate for legislators, professionals and the general public. We appreciate that you have formulated and raised H.B. 6549 to address these requests with an objective approach.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. If you have any questions regarding this testimony, please contact me at lindae@ctoralhealth.org or 860.246.2644, ext 202.